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each lawsuit be a “covered class action,” which by statutory definition needs more than fifty plaintiffs, not two or three.

Andersen filed a combined opposition to remand, and Plaintiffs’ reply has been filed. Kopper now also opposes remand of *Pearson* and *Delgado*. The *Pearson* and *Delgado* Plaintiffs incorporate their motions to remand and supporting memoranda in this joint reply. In reply they respond briefly to Kopper’s argument, which mirrors Andersen’s, that this case falls within SLUSA’s purview. A review of Kopper’s combined opposition establishes the lack of authority to support the proposition that individual securities-related actions may not be maintained in state court. Plaintiffs also reply to Kopper’s erroneous contention that their claims arise under federal law.¹

In short, nothing in Kopper’s opposition allows for the aggregation of plaintiffs in separately filed actions, which is the primary basis for Andersen’s removal of the two actions. The Court should grant Plaintiffs’ motions to remand, and remand *Pearson* to the 164th Judicial District Court of Harris County, Texas, and *Delgado* to the 55th Judicial District Court of Harris County, Texas, where the cases were filed originally.

II. ARGUMENT

A. Kopper Omits Relevant Legislative History of SLUSA

Kopper argues that remand should be denied because “Congress . . . has preempted all state law security actions falling within [the] parameters [of SLUSA and the PSLRA]. See opposition at 4. He continues by referring to the legislative history of SLUSA and including an out-of-context excerpt of a Senate report. *Id.* Kopper’s argument lacks merit for two reasons. First, reference to the legislative history of SLUSA is unnecessary in this case. Second,

¹ Kopper does not brief the issue but instead joins in other Defendants’ briefing.

however, the statute's legislative history establishes Congress' intent that individual non-class securities-related actions be maintained in state court.

The supreme court is unequivocal about the construction of an unambiguous statute:

Our first step in interpreting a statute is to determine whether the language issue has a plain and unambiguous meaning with regard to the particular dispute in the case. Our inquiry must cease if the statutory language is unambiguous and "the statutory scheme is coherent and consistent."

See Robinson v. Shell Oil Co., 519 U.S. 337, 340 (1997) (citations omitted). Understandably, no court has held SLUSA ambiguous because the statutory language speaks for itself; for a case to be a "covered class action," the statute plainly requires more than fifty plaintiffs. Therefore, under the Supreme Court's instruction, any inquiry must cease at the statute's wording.

Courts' interpretation of SLUSA as an unambiguous statute is hardly a novel legal concept. In fact, this Court has recently concluded just that. *See In re Waste Mgmt., Inc. Secs. Litig.*, ____ F.Supp. 2d ____, 2002 WL 464222 (S.D. Tex. Feb. 5, 2002).

In discussing SLUSA, the Court concluded that the statute "preempt[ed] **class actions** based on state statutory or common law involving a 'covered security' as defined in that act." *Id.* at *2 (emphasis supplied). It continued by observing that therefore "SLUSA in essence made federal court the exclusive venue for **securities fraud class actions** meeting its definitions and ensured they would be governed exclusive by federal law." *Id.* (emphasis supplied). And the Court also noted that "a [House] report indicates that in SLUSA Congress did not evidence an intent to occupy the entire field of securities regulation, but expressly delineated the scope of preemption" *Id.* Further, according to this Court, "with respect to removal, the plain language of SLUSA . . . evidences Congress' intent to preempt a specifically defined category of state-law class actions" The Court then went on to provide the statutory definition of a "covered class action." *Id.* at *2-3.

Resort to the history of SLUSA is unnecessary because of its unambiguous wording. Assuming, however, that the Court wishes to look further into the statute's legislative history, both Senate and House reports establish that individual non-class actions are entitled to be brought and maintained in state court.

In his opposition at 4, Kopper quotes an out-of-context excerpt from a May 1998 Senate report. But the same report, in discussing the definition of "class action," reinforces Plaintiffs' position:

The definition of class action originally drafted as part of S. 1260 would inadvertently include cases that were beyond the intent of the legislation — such as certain types of individual state private securities actions. . . .

In order to ensure that individual state actions would not be included as part of the bill's definitions the committee specifically included a threshold number of 50 or more persons . . . as part of the definition of a class action under this legislation.

See S. Rep. No. 105-182, 1998 WL 226714 at *6. Similarly, some five months later, a Senate conference report noted the following:

The purpose of [SLUSA] is to help ensure that securities fraud class actions involving certain securities traded on national markets are governed by a single set of uniform standards. **While preserving the right of individual investors to bring securities lawsuits wherever they choose**, the bill generally provides that class actions can be brought only in federal court where they will be governed by federal law.

144 Cong. Rec. S12444-01, 1998 WL 712149 (Cong. Rec.) at *S 12445 (emphasis supplied). Likewise, the House explained that SLUSA was enacted to solve the problem presented by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1998, Pub. L. 104-67, 109 Stat. 737 (PSLRA). The enactment of the PSLRA resulted in many securities class actions being brought in state court. Therefore, SLUSA was passed "to make federal court the exclusive venue for most securities

fraud class action litigation involving nationally traded securities.” 144 Cong. Rec. H10771-02, 1998 WL 712049 at *H10775.

In short, the legislative history of SLUSA does not begin to support Kopper’s argument. The legislative history, if relevant at all, serves only to further buttress Plaintiffs’ position.

In his opposition at 5, Kopper also cites *Gibson v. PS Group Holdings, Inc.*, 2000 WL 777818 (S.D. Cal. June 14, 2000), to support his contention that plaintiffs in separately filed actions may be aggregated to create a “covered class action” — the foundation underlying Andersen’s removal of *Pearson* and *Delgado*. *Gibson* is of no help to Kopper. First, the case was an undisputed class action, which obviates the aggregation theory devised by Andersen at removal and now copied by Kopper. Second, despite being a class action the case was remanded (under the Delaware carve-out exception). *Id.* at *6. Third, at issue in *Gibson* was the fact that the class action plaintiffs had deleted a prayer for damages, in an apparent attempt to avoid SLUSA’s “covered class action” definition. *Id.* at *3. In no way is *Gibson* controlling here. Significantly, Kopper fails to cite a single opinion holding that plaintiffs in separate suits may be added up to reach SLUSA’s fifty-person minimum.

B. Plaintiffs’ State Law Claims Cannot be Preempted

Realizing that his interpretation of SLUSA rests on precarious legal grounds, Kopper attempts to find an independent jurisdictional basis for the two cases to remain in this Court. He does so by trying to recharacterize the *Pearson* and *Delgado* petitions — both of which advance only state common law claims in state court — as asserting federal securities violations (insider trading and fraud-on-the-market). He then contends that “securities fraud actions such as those pled” in *Pearson* and *Delgado* are preempted. Kopper’s argument fails.

A plaintiff is generally the master of his complaint. *See, e.g., Avitts v. Amoco Prod. Co.*, 53 F.3d 690, 693 (5th Cir. 1995) (citations omitted). Therefore, when both federal and state remedies are available, a plaintiff may elect to proceed exclusively under state law. That election does not give rise to federal jurisdiction. *See id.* (citation omitted).

Under the “artful pleading” doctrine, however, if a right to relief necessarily depends on the resolution of federal law, the case may arise under federal law. *See Franchise Tax Bd. v. Construction Laborers’ Vacation Trust*, 463 U.S. 1, 28 (1983). But a “substantial, disputed question of federal law is a necessary element of one of the well-pleaded state claims.” *Id.* at 13. “[T]he mere presence of a federal issue in a state cause of action does not automatically confer federal-question jurisdiction.” *Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Inc. v. Thompson*, 478 U.S. 804, 813 (1986). “Rather, in determining federal question jurisdiction, courts must make ‘principled, pragmatic distinctions,’ engaging in ‘a selective process which picks the substantial causes of action out of the web and lays the other ones aside.’” *See Zuri-Invest Ag. v. Natwest Fin. Inc.*, 177 F.Supp. 2d 49, 54 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (quoting *Merrell Dow*).

Plaintiffs’ original petitions advance only state common law claims of fraud, negligence and civil conspiracy; and they seek damages based only on those claims.² Nevertheless, Kopper tries to transform them into pleadings seeking affirmative relief under federal securities law. Removal is improper under this basis as well.

The most obvious flaw in Kopper’s position is evidenced by a review of the pleadings themselves; a substantial federal question is not presented. Second, Kopper misrepresents securities law as being one of complete preemption.

² Kopper’s assertion that Texas does not recognize fraud-on-the-market is irrelevant. The *Pearson* and *Delgado* petitions adequately allege fraud under Texas law. *See* petitions at 29-31. Further, the petitions advance two other state law causes of action that Kopper ignores.

The Securities Exchange Act of 1934 includes a savings clause unambiguously stating that “the rights and remedies provided . . . shall be in addition to any and all other rights and remedies that may exist at law or in equity.” *See* 15 U.S.C. § 77bb(a), as amended. And, significantly, this Court has already acknowledged SLUSA’s limited preemptive powers: “in SLUSA Congress did not evidence an intent to occupy the entire field of securities regulation, but expressly delineated the scope of preemption . . .” *See In re Waste Mgmt. Secs. Litig.*, 2002 WL 464222 at *2; *see also Zuri-Invest Ag.*, 177 F.Supp. 2d at 194; *Gold v. Blinder, Robinson & Co., Inc.*, 580 F.Supp. 50, 53 (S.D.N.Y. 1984) (granting motion to remand); *McMahon Chevrolet, Inc. v. Davis*, 392 F.Supp. 322, 324 (S.D. Tex. 1975) (same). In fact, “few statutes possess ‘the extraordinary preemptive power’ required to occupy a field of law so entirely as to characterize any claims arising thereunder as federal.” *See Zuri-Invest Ag.*, 177 F. Supp. 2d at 195 (citation omitted). Rather, “the Supreme Court has recognized complete preemption in just three areas: labor relations, ERISA, and tribal claims.” *See Farkas v. Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc.*, 113 F.Supp.2d 1107, 1111 (W.D. Ky. 2000) (citation omitted). The Fourth Circuit summed up the issue of limited securities law preemption:

It is well-settled that federal law does not enjoy complete preemptive force in the field of securities. . . . “[F]ar from preempting the field, Congress has expressly reserved the role of the states in securities regulation.

* * *

See . . . 15 U.S.C. § 78bb(a) (1934 Act’s authorization for concurrent state regulation in the securities field). The states enjoy broad powers to regulate such diverse subjects as . . . fraud in the sale or purchase of securities and the rendering of investment advisory services.

* * *

[A state] therefore may provide additional rights and remedies which do not conflict with federal securities law.

* * *

See *Baker, Watts & Co. v. Miles & Stockbridge*, 876 F.2d 1101, 1107 (4th Cir. 1989); see also *Barbara v. New York Stock Exch., Inc.*, 99 F.3d 49, 55 (2d Cir. 1996) (construing the Exchange Act's savings clause to "plainly refer [] to claims created by the Act or by rules promulgated thereunder, but not to claims created by state law").

The *Pearson* and *Delgado* Plaintiffs chose to pursue only state law claims and remedies, as the law obviously entitles them to do. Therefore, Kopper's opposition presents no support for removal on this basis either.

III. CONCLUSION

For all reasons above and in the *Pearson* and *Delgado* Plaintiffs' motions to remand, this Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction. It should order the actions remanded to the 164th and 55th Judicial District Courts of Harris County, Texas, where the two cases were filed originally.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Sean Jez', written over a horizontal line.

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